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Why Someone Else's Tragedy Can Affect You

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You've witnessed someone else experience a life threatening event, you've seen a natural disaster on TV, or you've heard about someone else losing their life tragically and you can't understand why it's affecting you. We're not immune to other people's tragedy. The below information might explain why this is a natural part of being human.

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1. You're experiencing your **own traumatisation** from witnessing someone else's trauma. This can happen when you see someone come close to death, or even die, most commonly in an accident. You may have vivid images of the accident that you can't get rid of, similar sounds or smells to the accident may set your heart racing or your hands shaking, you may be over-protective of those you love, or you may start to believe that things you used to do aren't safe anymore. Know that this is your brain trying to make sense of what you've seen, and that it's trying to protect you from future harm. While these reactions are normal in the days and weeks following the witnessing of a traumatic event, if they persist and are interfering with your everyday life you may want to seek assistance.
2. What someone else has gone through **reminds you of something you have experienced** in your past. If you've experienced your own trauma, hearing about someone else

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going through a similar thing can often trigger off unresolved thoughts and feelings. While you can understand and truly empathise on a deeper level with what someone else is experiencing, you may also re-experience your own trauma. If you haven't acknowledged or worked with your own experience to integrate it into your life, then you may experience thoughts and feelings that lead to behaviours that are detrimental to your everyday life.

granted and hold those we love a little bit closer. So acknowledge all the feelings that a tragedy brings up for you, and don't wait for tomorrow to do those things that are important to you.

It is normal and natural for us to be affected by someone else's trauma because it can create our own sense of traumatisation, it can remind us of our own pain and mortality, it can make us feel helpless, and it can challenge our long held beliefs. However, this is all part of being human.

If you have had a reaction to someone else's trauma and you feel like it's interfering with your life, you may want to consider seeking support from a professional who specialises in trauma.

If you would like help with your thoughts, feelings or behaviours, please contact us on 0488 954 195, amanda@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)

3. What someone else has gone through **reminds you of your own losses**. We all experience loss in our lives – whether that's of a special grandparent, treasured parent, beloved partner or a precious child. Sometimes hearing about someone else's death can remind us of the important people no longer in our lives, which in turn can lead to thinking about all the things they never got to do, the things we miss about them, or the things that we've missed out on doing with them.
4. You feel **helpless**. If we're witness to someone else's tragedy we can often feel helpless – not knowing what to say, what to do, or how to behave. This can happen regardless of whether we knew the people involved, or we didn't. Human nature drives us to help others when they're in pain, and when we can't help we're left with feelings of powerlessness and helplessness.
5. Someone else's tragedy makes it clear that **bad things can happen to good people**. We're often bought up thinking that if you do good things, then good things will happen to you. Unfortunately there is randomness in life, and someone else's traumatic experience can highlight to us that we don't have total control of what happens, to whom, and when.
6. Someone else's tragedy reminds you that **life is precious**. I believe this is actually a good thing. While it's horrible, awful, terrible, and devastating to hear or witness a trauma, it can make us all take life less for

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